

Evil Ernie ™&©1993 Brian Pulido. ARR.



Spreading the Word on Secret City

Jack Kirby is perhaps the most influential artist in modern comics; no one has made more of a contribution to the visual style of the field. More and more fans are becoming aware that, as a writer, Kirby was also a major influence on the industry; his cosmic creations for Marvel and DC, among others, opened up new vistas that are still being explored today. That's why Jim Salicrup, editor of Topps Comics, was so pleased that Topps was able to sign a deal do develop a variety of Kirby creations in the next year; not only will these new books feature occasional Kirby artwork, but they will all feature concepts that Kirby fans have never before had the chance to enjoy.

"We were made aware that over the years, Jack had developed or had retained rights to different properties, some of which have been published before—like Captain Victory and Silver Star—but the bulk of which hadn't," Salicrup said. "That was all we needed to hear; we immediately began negotiating. It was one of the most satisfying negotiations I've ever been involved with; Jack and Roz are great, wonderful people, and it was a pleasure to deal with them."

Topps will introduce its Kirby series with a special sixteen-page comic that leads into the new miniseries being unveiled later this month. "It begins with ***Secret City Saga #0***, a sixteen-page comic that introduces the world," Salicrup said. "That has the first Secret City story in it, written by Roy Thomas and penciled and inked by Walter Simonson. It also has a Satan's six story by John Cleary and Armando Gil. These set up the characters and put everything into motion. Satan's Six is a bit easier once you've read the Secret city Saga.

"***Secret City #0*** introduces an ancient world that existed here 50,000 years ago, but was on the verge of destruction; through the use of the Triad Cell, they send three soldiers into their future—our present—to save us from the next major disaster that threatens to wipe us all out. These characters are Bombast, Night Glider, and Captain Glory. They should have all popped out of the Cell at the same time, but the programming is off a little bit. "

Kirby is well-known for the various superhero universe he's created in more than a half-century of comics work, so it's no surprise that all of the Secret City books are set in a single universe. Salicrup things it goes farther than that, though. "What I've been telling everyone lately is that I believe there's only *one* universe, no matter who publishes it," Salicrup said. "With Savage Dragon appearing in ***Bombast #1***, that ties it in with the Image universe, for instance."

The Secret city titles are just the first in what will be an impressive line of Kirby books. "I'd say that, tentatively, one can almost expect two Kirby titles a month from Topps. when these books run their course, there will be another two replacing them. If things keep doing well, we may even expand that number," Salicrup said.

In addition to Kirby concepts, some of the titles feature artwork by Kirby; as Topps began doing preliminary work on their line of Kirby comics, they discovered that there were hundreds of pages of Kirby art in various stages of completion—and even some entire books. Satan's Six will feature several Kirby pages inked by such big names as Frank Miller, Terry Austin, Steve Ditko, and Joe Sinnott. "Some of the books in the future will feature more Kirby art; we're being very sparing with it, but there is more to come. The second issue of ***Secret City Saga*** has three villain trading cards with pencils by Jack Kirby; we have Dave Gibbons, John Byrne, and Bill Sienkiewicz finishing those cards. The most unexpected place where Kirby's art is now is on the back of the ***Vlad the Impaler*** trading cards, which is a pin-up pencilled by Jack Kirby and inked by Mike Mignola."

When the opportunity to ink Jack Kirby's work is made available, there are few pros who can resist the chance. "We're seeing a lot of enthusiasm. With the the first issue of ***Satan's Six***," Salicrup said, "there were a couple of people who had to be turned away because of deadline reasons—Dave Gibbons and Art Adams, both of whom we'll be able to accommodate later on. Art is inking Ditko's pencils on the cover of ***Secret City #1.***"

Reuniting such old-timers as Kirby, Ditko, Ayers, Severin, Thomas, and Friedrich makes comparisons to the early days of the Marvel bullpen inevitable. "We were trying to throw in a lot of things to make ***Secret City*** worthwhile," Salicrup said. "For example, there's a backup story feature Batton Lash's characters Wolff & Byrd. The story was a tribute to Steve Ditko, so we got Ditko to ink it; that really made Batton Lash's year, I think. ***Satan's Six #1***, in many ways, has that feel of one of those early Marvels where the lead feature has Kirby and the backup feature has Ditko.

"Gary Friedrich has been out of comics for quite a while; he and Roy were old friends of our creative director, and he got back in touch at the time we were launching the comics. I couldn't resist reuniting the whole ***Sgt. Fury*** team."

While Topps is making use of some veteran talent, not every creator is an "old-timer." "John Cleary is brand new," Salicrup said. "We're going the whole range here. There'll be people making their debut in Topps comics, joining the veterans who are working for us. For example, ***Bradbury Comics #8***, which just came out, has Harvey Kurtzman's last story. So we're running the whole gamut from people at the end of an esteemed career to people who are just starting out.

"We're interested in hot artists of the moment, but at the same time, we don't want to exclude the other artists who are available. Given the right project, these people can become the *next* stars. And that's as exciting to me as—if not moreso than—working with the big names. If you're going to have Todd McFarlane or Jim Lee, you don't have to work hard to make it a big seller; if you can succeed without those top names, then you've accomplished something... and that's what we intend to do."

by Cliff Biggers

Marvel Villains Stalk the Comic Shops This Summer

It's a great summer for Marvel villains; not only is Venom continuing in further miniseries, but Sabretooth and Deadpool will both be starring in their own miniseries this June—and Marvel is betting that superhero fans couldn't be happier to see these guys in solo action.



Deadpool

Deadpool's former employer, the X-Force's enemy Tolliver, is dead—and everyone wants a piece of his immense estate. Deadpool is determined to find the will, even though their are some pretty powerful enemies who hope to stop him... enemies such as Juggernaut, the Executive Elite, Black Tom Cassidy, and the new villain Slayback, who really wants to see Deadpool dead. Furthermore, Nyko is stalking Deadpool in order to avenge his brother's death; Kane is vying with him for Vanessa's affections; and a confrontation with the new and improved Weapon X looks pretty much inevitable...

Deadpool is written by Fabian Nicieza and illustrated by Joe Madureira and Mark Farmer. The cover for first issue features an embossed image of Deadpool leaning against a debossed (recessed) metallic-ink logo. ***Deadpool #1***, a $2.50 comic, is scheduled for June 17th release.

Sabretooth

Sabretooth has rapidly become the most popular mutant villain in today's Marvel Universe; his recent appearances in Wolverine have been quick sellouts. It's no surprise, then, that Marvel is awarding him his own four-issue limited series this June.

Sabretooth is hunting for his nemesis, Wolverine—but he's also being hunted by a determined female assassin who hopes to avenge the murders of innumerable victims at Sabretooth's hands. As Sabretooth becomes both the hunter and the hunted, fans learn a great deal about his secret life.

Sabretooth is written by larry Hama and illustrated by Mark Texeira. The first issue features a die-cut cover highlighted by Sabretooth's claw slashes across the logo; the slash-marks reveal a red inner cover featuring a montage of various events in Sabretooth's life. ***Sabretooth #1***, a 32-page comic in the Marvel Fanfare format, is priced at $2.95; look for it on June 24th.



Venom

Hot on the heels of the mega-hit Venom miniseries, ***Venom: Funeral Pyre*** is a three-issue miniseries that teams the villainous "hero" with the Punisher. The book brings Eddie Brock and Frank Castle together to battle a San Francisco street gang that's armed with super-technology.

Venom: Funeral Pyre is written by Carl Potts, formerly the writer of ***Punisher War Journal***; the series is illustrated by Tom Lyle (artist of DC's ***Robin*** miniseries and the ***Spider-Man*** installments of Maximum Carnage) and Joe Rubinstein.

Venom: Funeral Pyre #1, a July 1st release, will feature a unique holografx foil cover that spotlights both the Punisher and Venom against a background of bronze holografx "flaming foil." The first issue is priced at $2.95.

With all this attention, it looks likely that Marvel's villains will soon be going straight... straight to the top of the sales charts, that is!

by Wayne Lee

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Alien Legion Is Epic's Oldest Heavy Hitter



Alien Legion: One Planet At a Time is one of several titles involved in Epic's Heavy Hitters promotion—but it holds the distinction of being Epic's oldest Heavy Hitters title, having first debuted as an Epic book a decade ago. The series hasn't exactly been appearing regularly all that time, though; that's not a sign that Marvel had no confidence in the book, though, as much as it is a conscious decision by editor and ***Alien Legion*** co-creator *Carl Potts* to maintain quality in each Alien Legion limited series rather than emphasizing a monthly schedule.

"The comic was blessed with a whole series of quality artists," Potts said, "all of who went on to become some of the hottest artists in the industry... ***Alien Legion: One Planet at a Time*** illustrator *Huang Nguyen* has the potential to develop into one of the top talents, too. This new series is penned by longtime ***Alien Legion*** scribe *Chuck Dixon*, who is one of the hottest comics writers today for his work on ***Punisher War Zone***, ***Robin***, and other titles."

the newest limited series, which picks up immediately where the last series left off, pits Jugger Grimrod and the Legion against an invisible alien force that is conquering the universe one planet at a time. The problem is, no one has ever seen these aliens, so the Legion doesn't know exactly how to combat them! ***Alien Legion: One Planet at a Time #1,*** a $4.95 comic, is scheduled for May 6th release.

Skycap Milk Caps Are Cream of the Crop

Skybox, the company responsible for some of the most popular cards in the comic-card field (including the ***DC Cosmic Cards*** and the ***Marvel Universe Cards***), has announced its intentions to branch into a new field later this year with the release of a new series of milk cap products called ***Skycaps.*** Their first releases will feature popular DC characters.

According to *George White* of Skybox, "The popularity of milk covers—or 'POGs'—has reached incredible proportions in Hawaii, and the covers, as well as the game (similar to marbles) played with them, were reported in the March 15th issue of ***Newsweek...*** The first ***DC Skycaps*** product will feature Superman and related characters from DC Comics, including many of the famous allies and enemies of the Man of Steel. DC Comics will provide artwork for each character included in the set, which will be produced in full-color on high quality, finished cardboard."

Skybox's first ***SkyCap*** products should be available in mid-May; the ***SkyCaps*** will be available in six-SkyCap packs priced at $1.95.

Two-Parter Showcases Two-Face

Everyone is clamoring for copies of the first few installments of *Knightfall*—and you know that the demand is only going to increase as the storyline progresses... just as it did for the *Doomsday* storyline in the Superman titles last fall. If the Batman story follows the same pattern that the Superman books followed, then the hardest of all the books to find will be the installments that appear outside of the regular run of books. Well, bearing that in mind, let us give you advance warning of a couple of special *Knightfall* installments you might want to keep an eye open for...



Showcase '93 #s 7 & 8, both slated for June release, feature a two-part Two-Face story in which Batman faces the last escapes from Arkham Asylum: his unpredictable nemesis Two-Face. The confrontation is written by *Doug Moench* and illustrated by *Klaus Janson*. Of course, the book will also feature additional stories starring Peacemaker and Deathstroke, Jade and Obsidian, and Fire and Ice—but it's those Batman stories that are going to make this one go fast, so don't miss out! *Bill Sienkiewicz* supplies the cover for ***Showcase '93 #7,*** a June 10th release, while *Glenn Fabry* supplies the cover for ***Showcase '93 #8,*** which hits the stands a scant seven days later. Each book is priced at $1.95.

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WILDC.A.T.S: THE TRILOGY • MAY '93

STORY BY DAFYDD WYN AND BRANDON CHOI

image

RAK Ready to Hit the Racks Again

In the mid and late 80's, RAK Graphics was an active publisher in the field of heroic fantasy, producing the popular ***Thundermace*** series. Then, in the early 90's, RAK Graphics virtually disappeared from the comics racks. Robert *A. Kraus*, the publisher and illustrator of RAK Graphics, hadn't given up on comics—but with the demands of a thriving art-print business, a fitnesswear company, and a major videogame project in conjunction with SEGA of America, he found himself with very little leftover time to illustrate comics.

Now that his videogame project, ***Chakan the Forever Man***, is completed, and his other businesses are up and running, Rob Kraus is returning to comics; his first publication, RAK, is a collection of hundreds of illustrations by Kraus, including the comic book characters who will be a part of the RAK Publishing line in the near future. ***RAK #1***, a 48-page squarebound black and white comic scheduled for May release, is priced at $5.

Other RAK releases coming up this spring include ***Chakan: The Forever Man,*** the comic book that inspired the upcoming Sega video game. The $4 first issue pits Chakan against The Beast and some fanatical cultists; look for it in May.

Thundermace: Book One, Kraus's heroic fantasy compendium, collects the first four issues of ***Thundermace*** into a hundred-page trade paperback affordably priced at $6; it, too, is scheduled for May release.

In upcoming months, RAK Graphics has other titles on line, including ***Chakan II: The Nightmare's Thrall,*** a graphic novel followup to ***Chakan: The Forever Man; The Chakan Compendium,*** a squarebound collection of illustrated Chakan short stories; ***RAK Rampage,*** a new anthology featuring Stephen Darkbird the Survivor and other characters created by Kraus and others; and ***Thundermace #6,*** the first new continuation of Thundermace adventures.

Monster Comics With Universal Appeal

No matter how advanced the art of special effects becomes, today's horror films remain hard-pressed to match the mood and style of the classic Universal horror films of years past. ***Frankenstein, Dracula, The Wolfman, The Mummy***—these are just a few of the many gothic masterpieces that came out of Universal Studios in the 1930's and 1940's.



In recent years, a lot of horror comics have turned to contemporary splatter and slasher films as their inspiration; in a refreshing move, though, Dark Horse Comics is looking a half-century or more into the past with its new series of Universal Monsters comic adaptations of classic Universal film. The first deluxe one-shot adapts ***Frankenstein,*** the film that made *Boris Karloff* an international star. The adaptation, taken from the original Universal screenplay, is produced by *Den Beauvais*, the artist whose stunning airbrush work was so popular on ***Aliens Book Two. Universal Monsters: Frankenstein,*** a 48-page squarebound full-color oneshot, is scheduled for June 24th release.

Cain Fans Await a Frenzy-ed Future

Harris Comics is doing everything they can to make sure that fans don't miss out on their exciting new series, ***Cain***: the first issue has been promoted via a special die-cut card appearing in ***Wizard,*** while Harris is preparing two different covers for the second issue. Both covers are painted by *Brian Stelfreeze*, whose work on ***Batman: Shadow of the Bat*** has been wowing fans recently; one cover will feature Cain, while the other will feature Frenzy. Distribution will be random, with most stores receiving approximately equal numbers of each cover. Meanwhile, in the second issue's story, not only does Cain have to rescue Frenzy from his former employers, but he also has to deal with the mysterious return of a figure from his past. ***Cain #2***, a $2.95 comic written by *David Quinn* and illustrated by *Hannibal King* and *Matt Banning*, is scheduled for June release.

A Veritable Thunderstorm

Is there room for two Thunderbolts? That's a question that *Peter* Cannon will have to answer for himself pretty soon; when he returns to the monastery where he was trained, he learns that his predecessor, the original Thunderbolt, is still alive! *Michael Collins* and *Jose Marzan, Jr.*, chronicle Peter Cannon's dilemma in ***Peter Cannon—Thunderbolt #12,*** a June 17th release.



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CSN CHARTS

TOP 50 COMICS

CSN's Top Seller charts are based on figures supplied by the two major distributors, Diamond Distribution and Capital City Distribution, as well as figures by a cross-section of comics speciality shops. The distributor's figures represent retailer orders placed on the titles, while the information from stores represents copies sold.

1. Stormwatch 1
2. Darker Image 1
3. Maxx 1
4. Cable 1
5. Spawn 9
6. Uncanny X-Men 300
7. Wildstar: Sky Zero 1
8. Supreme 2
9. Spider-Man Unlimited 1
10. Venom 4
11. Magnus 25
12. Spectacular Spider-Man 200
13. Web of Spider-Man 100
14. 1963: Mystery, Inc. 1
15. X-Men 20
16. X-Force 22
17. Spider-Man 2099 7
18. Ren & Stimpy 6
19. Rai & the Future Force 10
20. Bloodshot 5
21. Wolverine 69
22. HARD Corps 7
23. X-Factor 90
24. Punisher 2099 4
25. Lobo: Portrait of a Victim 1
26. Batman 492
27. Amazing Spider-Man Annual 27
28. Amazing Spider-Man 377
29. Batman 493
30. X-O Manowar 17
31. Doom 2099 5
32. Eternal Warrior 11
33. Harbinger 18
34. Detective Comics 659
35. Solar, Man of the atom 22
36. Archer & Armstrong 11
37. Spider-Man 34
38. Invaders 1
39. Secret Defenders 3
40. Death: The High Cost of Living 3
41. Shadowman 14
42. Hellstorm 2
43. Silver Surfer & Warlock: Resurrection 3
44. Marvel Masterpiece Collection 1
45. Ghost Rider 37
46. Wild Thing 2
47. Icon 1
48. Incredible Hulk 405
49. Moon Knight 50
50. Kid Eternity 1

TOP DOLLAR COMICS

The following comics, graphic novels and trade paperbacks were given Top Dollar ratings based on the dollar volume of the copies sold (or are expected to sell) during the late March and April sales period.

1. Uncanny X-Men 300
2. Cable 1
3. Spider-Man Unlimited 1
4. Darker Image 1
5. Venom 4
6. Magnus 25
7. Stormwatch 1
8. Wildstar: Sky Zero 1
9. Maxx 1
10. Spawn 9
11. Spectacular Spider-Man 200
12. Web of Spider-Man 100
13. Supreme 2
14. Rai & the Future Force 10
15. Bloodshot 5
16. Amazing Spider-Man Annual 27
17. HARD Corps 7
18. 1963: Mystery Inc. 1
19. X-Men 20
20. Ren & Stimpy 6
21. X-O Manowar 17
22. X-force 22
23. Eternal Warrior 11
24. Harbinger 18
25. Silver Surfer & Warlock: Resurrection 3
26. Marvel Masterpieces Collection 1
27. Spider-Man 2099 7
28. Wolverine 69
29. Solar, Man of the Atom 22
30. Archer & Armstrong 11
31. Death: The High Cost of Living 3
32. Lobo: Portrait of A Victim 1
33. Icon 1
34. Spider-Man 34
35. Invaders 1
36. Moon Knight 50
37. Shadowman 14
38. X-Factor 90
39. Punisher 2099 4
40. Secret Defenders 3
41. Dracula: Vlad the Impaler 1
42. Dragon Lines 1
43. Batman 492
44. Amazing Spider-Man 377
45. Batman 493
46. Hellstorm 2
47. Kid Eternity 1
48. Ghost Rider 31
49. Predator: Race War 1
50. Ghost Rider 37

TOP 10 BLACK & WHITE COMICS

1. Cerebus 168
2. Dark Horse Presents 71
3. Eternity Triple Action 1
4. Cold Blooded 1
5. Savage Sword of Conan 209
6. Macross II 6
7. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 57
8. Ninja High School 36
9. U.N. Force 3
10. Conan Saga 73

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TOP TEN NON-COMICS

The Top Ten Non-Comics is based on number and not dollar value. This category includes graphic novels, hardcovers, trade paperbacks, portfolios, etc. It includes books that actually were on sale during the April sales period.

1. Newstime: The Life & Death of the Man of Steel
2. DC Cosmic Cards
3. Wizard 20
4. Overstreet Price Guide Volume 22 TPB
5. Superman: Panic In the Sky TPB
6. Death of Superman TPB
7. Green Lantern-Green Arrow Collection Volume Two TPB
8. Comics Values Monthly 81
9. Hildebrandt II Trading Cards
10. Marvel Universe Master Edition 30

Brian Pulido

by Cliff Biggers

Brian Pulido's first comics work, Evil Ernie, was a surprise hit for Malibu; it wasn't a standard horror book, it wasn't a hero book—in fact, it seemed to deliberately avoid genre classification as much as possible. Many fans said it read much like an adaptation of a movie someone forgot to make—which is more true than many suspected, since Evil Ernie was originally created as a film concept. In a conversation with CSN's Cliff Biggers, Brian Pulido talked about the new Evil Ernie series debuting this month from Chaos Comics, as well as talking about the character's background... and Pulido's future in the field.

What's the premise behind the new Evil Ernie series, Evil Ernie: The Resurrection?

We pick up the new series six months after the first series. The story takes place in Washington, D.C., where a Senate-Houe Investigation Committee is probing the psycho plague; they're out to nail Mary Young, who technically is responsible for bringing Evil Ernie into being.

The story takes place on the day before Halloween, Halloween, and the day after. Boy, it doesn't take Evil Ernie long to do a lot of damage... sometimes even I'm surprised! The Halloween angle is very important to this series...

In the previous series, Evil Ernie was younger, adolescent, into full-frontal assault. His quest for megadeath hasn't changed, but because of an event that happens in number one, he has a sense of cunning... he's a little more grown up. He's now going to use trick or treaters to his advantage.

Everyone Ernie murders returns with the same desire to kill as he; he telepathically controls the dead. As opposed to a full frontal assault this time around, since the story is happening on Halloween, Ernie is subtly and quietly murdering people and then sending them out to do his evil bidding. He's much harder to nail down this time. Additionally, the most popular costume this Halloween is the Evil Ernie costume.

I won't say exactly *what* Ernie wants to accomplish, but I can say that his mom always said that he couldn't be President, and he wants to prove her wrong... and that part is not pretty....

Who's working with you on Evil Ernie: The Resurrection?



StevenHughes is back as penciller; we took on a brand new inker, Mark Morales. He's wonderful; he's Joe Rubinstein's background guy, working on background with ***The Pitt,*** and he's wonderful. Our letterer is Patrick Ousley; we're incorporating every art form that we can in the comic, and that includes lettering. Lettering has become more than just lettering to us; it's a form of expression. We brought on Tom Smith from ***Hulk: Future Imperfect;*** it's beautiful beautiful work. This is full-blown blue-line color, and it's really impressive.

It just so happens that we met a lot of comics who became buddies then went on to become superstars. Joe Quesada, Jimmy Palmiotti, Chris Bachalo, Tom Morgan... there are some guys who are going to be involved who will really surprise you. I meet some of these guys and we really get along, so when I say, "Would you like to do something for ***Evil Ernie?***" they say "sure." They're doing some great stuff here.

Every Chaos comic cover will feature a specialized insignia. This first deluxe cover is a "freebie," with no additional charge for the cover. For the second issue, we're doing a holo lithograpic lighting cover featuring



amplified lightning bolts coming from Lady Death's head, courtesy of C hris Bachalo. We're cutting the profit margin to the bone to do these deluxe covers, but we want to establish ourselves and give retailers more confidence in our books.

What about your Ernie merchandising?

We have the Ernie sculpture, which was done by Michael Burnett, the special effects makeup guy for ***Universal Soldier.*** The detail is painstaking, of course. We also have Evil Ernie's button buddy, Smiley, which is also done by Michael. This button has a lot of appeal; I find that people don't have toknow a darn thing about Evil Ernie to know that they want that button. People who don't even know Evil Ernie are just going rabid for this button.

How did you come into comics with Evil Ernie?

I didn't know a soul in comics when I first started, so I put an ad in ***CBG*** and Steven Hughes was about the last guy to respond. I had almost given up on doing it when I saw his work and decided this was the guy for the book.

I had done a screenplay for ***Evil Ernie*** as a motion picture; I work in the motion picture business. I didn't take me long to relaize, though, that I really had no



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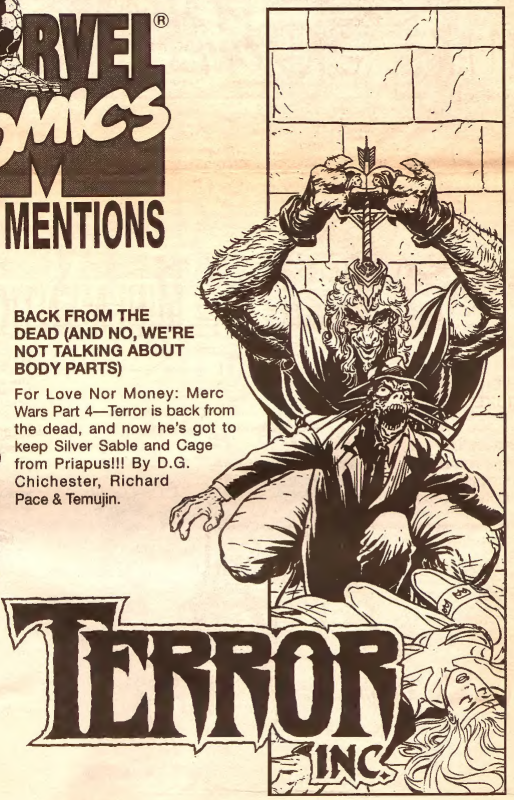
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BACK FROM THE DEAD (AND NO, WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT BODY PARTS)

For Love Nor Money: Merc Wars Part 4—Terror is back from the dead, and now he's got to keep Silver Sable and Cage from Priapus!!! By D.G. Chichester, Richard Pace & Temujin.



power or say over what was going to happen. I decided that if I made it into a comic, I could retain that control. I am the quintessential fanboy, and I thought that comics would be a great medium to make it real. This would show producers what it could be like.

Has there been any activity on the movie end yet?

For the last year, we've had many offers from people that everyone knows, but I can't drop names yet. So far, no one has said, "Let's do that movie." They like it, but they want a comedy, or they want to put it in a high school. The first time I meet a genuine producer who's credible and who says, "We like this story, let's do this story," then we have a deal.

What led you to self-publishing?

The politically correct answer, I guess, is that it was in the best interest of the property to move onwards. The guys at Malibu gave us complete creative freedom, which I definitely appreciated, but it was in the best interest of the property to do it ourselves.

Will all of your comics work appear under the Chaos imprint?

No, not actually. I'm beginning an association with Dark Horse Comics in which they're going to be releasing three series of mine beginning this fall. I'm working with the hottest talent I've found; you won't believe it. I know I'm working with some hot talents here.

The first book is ***Rack and Pain***, a four-issue limited series. The books that people will see coming out in the fall. I've enjoyed working with Dark Horse; I hope we continue this relationship for a long time. Dark Horse is a wonderful company to work for, very supportive...

In '94, we're doing four titles through Chaos. This is tougher stuff, a little meaner than the average comic; it has a real attitude. It's hard for us to buy capes and spandex for people with power; we also find it hard to believe that if people had great power, their first inclination would be to go out and save lives. We're going to be exploring the darker sides of power and how people will use them. We have a number of very interesting series in development on that issue.

Everyone is competing for the same dollar with these new universes this year; I don't see much fresh coming out of it overall. Wht we intend to publish next year will be the same caliber of quality that we've produced so far, maybe even better, but in a different direction. We want to do tougher, more challenging material, both for us and the reader.

I'm doing ***Rack & Pain,*** pencilled by Leonardo Jimenez; a year from now, he will be as bick as anybody. The best way to describe his artwork is, "What if Bart Sears had a head-on car collision with Geof Darrow?" His stuff is ultradetailed, very kinetic, and he'll give any image guy a run for his money in terms of layout—it's really flashy. I say that respectfully, because I love the Image guys... as I said, I'm a real fanboy. It's being inked by Mark McKenna and lettered by John Workman.

The destruction in this book, and the scale that it operates on, is very believable. They live a life of luxury, and they're paid to kill. Rack is a living weapon and Pain is a barbarian; this is a buddy comic. These guys are each as strong as Thanos, andyou believe it. It takes place in a world called the Pile; they live a life of luxury, and they're paid to kill. Everything in their lives is peachy until they are set up; they're sent by this man, Webb, to go on a kill mission in which they are sent to kill their boss's brother. From then on, they face some very powerful enemies who want them dead.

The second series is with Steven Hughes. I love working with this guy; when this is all over, no matter what happens, we're going to be making comics together. We met through an ad, but now we're best friends.

With ***Detonator,*** we're looking at the effects of profound power on a human being. In Los Angeles, right here and now, events occur in which people get power, in the course of the one-shot story, you'll discover exactly why. We decided to choose unusual people as recipients of power. For instance, one woman has a multiple personality disorder; one of her personalities receives the power. An East LA gang banger receives the power; we're having the dialogue authenticated by a gang member to make thi sbook believable....

One man, Pike, decides it's his mission to track down all the people who have power. It's a realistic view of the impact of extreme power on America; this America is devastated—the better part of Los Angeles is wiped out, Kansas City has disappeared into a black hole.

It's taking what I've seen and extrapolating it. When I read Marvel Comics as a kid, these guys always saved the universe, but everything ends really clean. We're wondering what happens after the Marvel Comics end; the building is down, it can't go back up... In a world populated by people with power, there have to be serious ramifications to their actions. These beings are god-like, and that doesn't make them more altruistic than the average person. We're very intersted in the greys as opposed to just black and white....

The third series is called ***The Crawler.*** This is illustrated by Joel Thomas; about a year from now, people will be comparing him to Sam Kieth and Simon Bisley. We took the innocence of the Silver Age superhero—our character got his powers in a goofy way just like all those Silver Age heroes— then we added the dark sensibility of



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March 1993

Dear DC Comics Retailers and Fans:

You may have noticed pages 19 and 20 of DEATH: THE HIGH COST OF LIVING #3 didn't look quite right. It wasn't a new Vertigo spin on printing. It was a mistake.

Due to a variety factors, these pages were not placed in a double spread format (left-right) as planned but rather right-left. They were intended to be seen together, not consecutively. Because we are committed to providing our readers with superior books, we will ship the corrected version of DEATH: THE HIGH COST OF LIVING #3 (same quantities) on April 6th. You can easily identify this version by the metallic lavender cover and the absence of the cover price.

Retailers: it is up to you how to handle the exchange of these copies. Keep in mind that we will ship only the quantities of the original orders, so you need some way of ensuring you have no charge replacement copies available for all your original customers. If you have unsold copies remaining, you may wish to bag them with the corrected version and sell them as a set.

Fans: bring your incorrect copies to your local comic book store to receive the correct version.

We apologize for the inconvenience and thank you for your understanding!

Sincerely,

DC Comics Marketing Department

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the antihero of the '90s. You're left with a hero who by day is adored as a do-gooder, but at night he's a murderous vigilante who is slowly turning into an insect. He will be to insects what Batman is to the bat. There's an element of gothic romance going on here as well, but we're exploring the duality of the character here.

We're going to continue exploring this direction in the next couple of years. We feel that everyone is doing the other stuff very well, so we're looking for our own niche. What we have to offer is a little more of the dark side.

There are some things that we're against: we're not into supercrazy ultraviolence, we're against brutality towards women, we don't feel that violence and nudity combine at all—strangely, there's a sense of strong morality to what we're doing. The real world is so frightening actually that this how we're able to contend with it. Punisher served his purpose in the mid-70's in terms of being a dark vigilante, but that time has gone. I live in Los Angeles, where they had the riots, and I don't think a gunshot to the dome is the answer any more. I don't want to be heavy here, but there is an attitude in these books.

We're trying to recreate the intensity you felt when you heard rock records for the first time—that in-your-face intensity that makes them unforgettable. Whether you agreed with the politics or not, Ice Cube's "The Predator" evoked an incredible feeling. That's what we're trying to approach here...

In a fictional world in which characters suffer major damage, is it easy to do ongoing episodic adventure?

No, not at all. The whole episodic form is difficult; if you're going to build change into a character and accomplish something, you have to be able to make a legitimate change—and, to a degree, episodic adventure negates that. Since my background is the motion picture business, my sensibilities are somewhere between a comic and a motion picture. You have to have a real sense of finality at the end of your story.

What's interesting about the ***Evil Ernie*** saga is that, while I've plotted out sixty issues or so, I have a real sense of purpose. We have a beginning and end in mind, but we're going to keep building and building here, and each story will have a climax of its own that'll surprise readers. There's an overall point to the whole thing, and the readers are going to have to put up with the breaking of expectations.

What else is in the works?

In September, there'll be a ***Lady Death Calendar*** with twelve plates pencilled and inked by Lady Death; we'll also re-release the original ***Evil Ernie*** series under the Chaos Comics banner. Then we will b edoing an ***Evil Ernie #0*** in November. Then, the really exciting news that people have been clamoring for is that we'll be doing a Lady Death miniseries called ***The Crusade***, probably pencilled and inked by Steven Hughes.

With ***Lady Death***, we wanted to do a series tha twould be challenging for the reader; she's a regal and sophisticated creature. Whatever you think you know about her, you don't know at all. In this story, people will learn how a girl named Hope during the time of the black plague eventually became the female personification of Death.

And of course, we already have new ***Evil Ernie*** series in mind—but to even tell you the title of the next series would give away something that we don't want to give away right now.

Quick Take With Steven Hughes

Steven Hughes, Evil Ernie's illustrator, initially became involved with the project when he responded to an ad. Since then, his artwork has been an integral part of Evil Ernie's success.

How did you come up with the design for Evil Ernie?

Brian came down to my house when we first hooked up; he was basically a model for Evil Ernie as you see him now. The energy that Ernie exudes was a part of Brian; he's incredibly energetic, and he became Evil Ernie right there. He started dancing around my house and became animaed and I got the feel of it, and that became the cahracter. A friend of Brian's created the basic design, and I embellished it. He was more simplified originally; I took it all one step beyond, though, and that's where Evil Ernie came from.

Ernie is a fanatical character. He's very, very maniacal—but in this series, he's more focused. His original agenda was *anybody, any time, any way*; now he's more cunning, and that makes him more deadly. It's fun to show that change in Ernie visually.

Was Evil Ernie your first comics work?

No; before that, I did ***Stark Future*** for Aircel, and I did a few small publications afterwards. I've never done the standard superhero books; in fact, I never had a desire to do standard superheroes. My type of superhero is definitely not standard. ***Detonator*** is a joint venture between the two of us that's more along the lines of what I wanted to do in terms of superhero work; I don't want to do the same old stuff that's already out there.

Will you continue doing Evil Ernie, or will you move on to other things?

I'm not tired of doing Ernie, but I have other things on my mind besides Ernie. It's really hard to say what I'll be doing a year from now; I'm taking it day by day right now. My schedule is busy—*really* busy—and I'm intent on putting this Ernie series to bed before I make too many longterm plans. Right now, I'm just a few pages away from finishing up the fourth issue; I'm also doing the cover to the fourth issue. Then I have one plate to do on the Lady Death Calendar and I'm through with that. I'll be doing the Lady Death one-shot, too. After that, I can't say yet...

How do you and Brian collaborate?

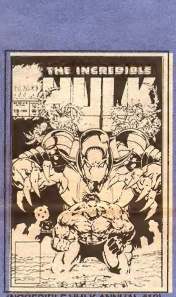
Brian gives me very detailed scripts, but he also gives me some leeway as the artist to do what I do best. Brian has faith in me; he comes to me with a script in rough form on paper, and then he goes through these elaborate layouts, sometimes with stick figures and sometimes with rough art. I go by that, looking at the script and the layout, and then I make the determination as to what I want to do, or what might work better. Brian lets me have free rein on that; he and I have been pretty pleased with the results.

Last Week *CSN* **was a double-sized issue featuring reviews of *The Geek, Green Lantern Quarterly #5, Secret City Saga, Midnight Men #1, 1963: Mystery Inc., Concrete Eclectica* and *Lost in Space Annual #2.***

Next Week *CSN* **will feature the complete May Checklist.**

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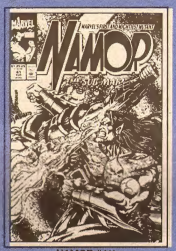
INCREDIBLE HULK ANNUAL #19!
This Annual marks the debut of Lazarus with an exclusive trading card!



KILLPOWER: THE EARLY YEARS #1!
See what the early Killpower was like in this issue with a foil-embossed cover!



NIGHTSTALKERS #10!
The "Midnight Massacre" begins! Each crossover boasts two covers. One is a Darkhold Envelope!



NAMOR #41!
Namor's return to the States is met by War Machine!



CAGE #17!
This INFINITY CRUSADE crossover is not to be missed!



NOMAD #16!
Trenchcoats will fly when Nomad goes head-to-head with the real Gambit!

MARVEL COMICS

MARVEL COMICS SHIPPING THE WEEK OF JUNE 1ST

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ROB LIEFELD • MARK PACELLA

JUNE '93

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